241 592 (a) with the labour of members of his family limited, in many cases, as far as the women and girls are concerned to casual assistance and to grudging work by his sons until they can find some paid employment away from the home farm, and

241 464 [461] [465] (b) with the high cost of non-family labour at between £1 and 30/- per eight-hour day where a member of the family would have worked from early morning until sundown. Moreover the supply of hirable labour is by no means great nor readily available and, unless a general economic collapse forces a return to the land, there are no indications of any improvement in the position. Rather is agricultural labour likely to become scarcer and more costly.

241 [461] The problem is considerably aggravated by the fact that as already suggested, the particular characteristics of Maltese farming demand an intensive application of manual labour, both in the maintainance of the more precarious fields as well as in cultivation. Something of the detail of this need emerges from a consideration of the timetable of the Maltese farmer both as regards the annual cycle of activity and the daily round of farm-work.

TIMETABLE

●221 241 The timetable of the Maltese farmer is more diverse and varied than is at first apparent. It is convenient to distinguish the daily timetable proper from the annual calendar of events. Under traditional peasant farming conditions there appears to have been a much greater degree of uniformity but as farming has been 'commercialized' so has the range of variety increased.

175 178 221 241 The peasant field-tiller depended on climate, on the crop cycle and on the sun. The year's round of field-work a century ago is recorded in an 1849 "Calendario dell'Agricoltore" (R/355) which listed the major farm activities of each month along with short articles on subjects of interest to the farmer of the time. Many of these topics, such as silk, olives, aniseed, cotton, honey, almonds, and tobacco, would not merit such prominence in a modern version of the Calendario[21]. More striking still is the emergence, since [234] [233] 1849, of dairying and stock-rearing, which was scarcely mentioned in the Calendario but has more recently grown to first importance for a large part of the farming community.

178 241 Changes of such magnitude over the century can be expected to affect the routine of farm-work and of village and family life. In the mid-nineteenth century, Maltese farming was still very much more 'peasant' than 'commercial' and the change between then and now becomes clear when a

178
241 modern calendar of events is considered.

As random sample illustrations three farmers' accounts of their own work during 1957-58 are analyzed[22]. At least they reveal something of the variety that now exists between one farmer and the next.

241 (1) A full-time field worker (Case X) usually working
461 with his brother and a nephew and having some irrigable land.
221 An analysis of the routine of this man is given (Case X; E, v. Work Analysis) and, from the same material, Mitchell has made a detailed study of time/labour utilization (B/525). A summary of this, which is on the basis of the ten hours per day worked by each of the three men over the year 1957-8, is also included in Case X.

(2) The second example relates to an arable farmer mainly concerned with irrigated produce (Case XI; E, v. Work Analysis). This man is helped in the fields by his wife and [592] family. The analysis illustrates the main features of this 'irrigated' farmer's year (although in the year studied there was an exceptional loss of time in the Autumn due to storm damage) and should be compared with (1) above. Irrigation accounts for about a quarter of the months May-July but occupies a mere two afternoons in the period November-February. Cutting and reaping accounts for even more time in July than does irrigation: by October plowing is the largest single item apart from "No work (storms)". In November, planting and sowing account for slightly more time than "collecting greenery" and is by far the main work of December (potatoes). General cultivation work occupies much of the next two months but pruning and grafting of vines is the biggest single item of February. The parallel between this and (1) is clear, apart from the special emphasis, on fruit - largely apples - in the former case.

234 (3) A Goats' milk producer with subsidiary cash-cropping
221 (Case II; E, v. Work Analysis) provides the third
461 sample study. In 1957 - 58 this herdsman spent all but thirty afternoons "grazing the goats" - on only one Sunday or 'festa' day did he not go out with his animals. This illustrates an important feature. While Sundays and Holy Days are normally kept free of field-work, work with animals has to be allowed. The herdsman is consequently much more tied to his farm than is the predominently arable farmer. He has a set daily schedule of feeding and milking the animals and cleaning out their stalls, etc., and can expect to have to adhere to this especially if he is working alone or with very little help. In fact the herdsman spends a considerable amount of his working year on

234 (i) the grazing mentioned,
221 (ii) cultivation of fodder crops,
461 (iii) tasks connected with the animals such as collecting milk receipts from the M.M.U., cleaning, building and repairing accommodation for the animals, taking animals for slaughter or caring for them if sick.

And this emphasis is even more strongly seen among the increasing number of dairy farmers in Malta relying on cows rather than goats, as a result of current guaranteed milk sales.

The essential difference between herdsman and field-tiller is, thus, that animals require constant attention throughout the year and demand a much more rigid daily schedule. In (3), care of the animals directly or indirectly takes the greater part of every working day.

221 The annual calendar of activities reflects the way in
24 which the farmer's life and work are bound up with the
178 elements which govern his environment. The storm damage of
181 late, 1957, a serious economic set-back, was regarded
[P31] fatalistically by the farmer. As soon as possible the normal routine of work was resumed and losses accepted with a great deal of talk but little action. The differences between the annual farming calendar of 1849 and that of today, illustrated by the above three examples, have included the extension of one crop at the expense of another. But even the reasons for such basic changes as the replacement of cotton by potatoes were not understood by the farmer. Cotton, for example, had become so firmly entrenched that only in face of impoverishment was it relinquished. The illiterate farmer suspects any innovation with which he is not familiar on the principle of "Better the evil you know than that you know not". He lives in a world where he sees himself fighting against forces over which he has no control. These include the climate, the Maltese economy, foreign trade conditions and, particularly, "them" - otherwise "Il-Gvern" or the Government and officialdom in general. He is also competing with his fellow farmers, but with the ways and wiles of these he is better acquainted.

241 This whole question of mental 'attitudes' to external
46 factors is held to be crucial in a study of illiterate
178 or recently-illiterate farming folk and is given further
181 consideration (Section 4). Suffice it at this stage to emphasize its importance in understanding the apparently illogical or irrational element which creeps into such a basic part of farming as the use of time. This becomes clear when a detailed cost-accounting of man/hours against productivity is made. Much of the work done is uneconomic in the sense that a great amount of time is spent with no

178 (e) The high costs of fuel (Case - XVII) and the
407 frequent need of spare-part replacements on account of damage.

(f) The increasing area being put to vines (Case - XX). The advantages of tractor-plowing to the farmer include

407 (i) the speed of operation, in contrast with the
427 traditional single-furrow wooden-plow working. Costs are therefore relatively cheap. They average about 15/- per tomna for tractor plowing and about £1 per hour for the hire of a threshing machine. Rotary cultivators can them-
[461] selves be hired at between 10/- and 12/- per hour. A job which would take a mule and plow a whole day is done in a matter of minutes by the mechanical plows.

407 (ii) the tractor-plow, or the rotary cultivator,
461 make it possible for one man to work a larger area than if
464 he had to rely on his own labour and hand-implements (Case - XX). To this extent such mechanization is solving the problem of labour shortage.

429 For the contractor himself there is a social as well
554 as financial profit deriving from his machines. He has come to be regarded as rather higher in the social plane than the hand-labouring farmer. But his financial status is also clearly far above that of the field worker with no implements and his remuneration per man/hour of effort far
[221] greater despite the limitations outlined above. The main disadvantage is the short plowing season over some three summer months or less. Some contractos hire their machines and services to builders and others out of the plowing season (Cases - XIV and XVII) while others own a threshing machine which brings in further contracts in the summer (Case XVII).

178 From what has been said it would appear that the large
407 tractor is not the answer to the labour problems of Maltese
427 farming, although it may bring considerable profit and
[434] advancement to the few dozen operators themselves. The present decline in this type of contracting has been noted. Charlton (B/381) maintains that this decline would be greatly accelerated if there were any large-scale return to the land in the near future. The small hand rotary cultivator is meeting with much more success and looks like going much further along the way to enabling a time/money conscious Maltese farmer to cultivate an adequate area with little or no paid hand-labour. Even this is however clearly limited by the point made earlier that the Maltese farming landscape has been built up by hand labour and much of it can only be maintained by that same meticulous attention.

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TABLE 6.

CASE X : WORK ANALYSIS, 1957-58

ACTIVITY	AUG. AM	AUG. PM	SEPT. AM	SEPT. PM	OCT. AM	OCT. PM	NOV. AM	NOV. PM	DEC. AM	DEC. PM	JAN. AM	JAN. PM	FEB. AM	FEB. PM	MAR. AM	MAR. PM	APR. AM	APR. PM	MAY AM	MAY PM	JUNE AM	JUNE PM	JULY AM	JULY PM	YEAR AM	YEAR PM
A NON-FIELD WORK																										
Sundays, Feasts(1)	5	4½	5	4	4	4	6	6	5	8	6	6	5	5	6	6	4	4	6	6	7	5	4	4	64	64½
To Valletta or Mosta			1						1	1	2½		1		1										6½	1
Ill-health and resting	½		½	½		1	1											1						1	2	3½
Too wet for field-work(2)					10½	8½	9	13	3	6	4	5	1	3	2	2	2½	1							32	39½
Too cold for field-work									1																1	
Pigs needing attention															1	1									1	1
Shooting birds			1				1½																		2½	
Repairing Storm Damage(2)										1					3	2									3	3
Other building Work(3)	1		½		4	5	4½	3	3	1½								2							13	8½
Implement maintainance												1				1										2
B FIELD WORK																										
Irrigating	1	11		5											1½	1½		4	2	5	2	11		11	6½	48½
Plowing, working(3)	1½		2		4½	6½	1	2½	1	2			7	4	2	2	6½	3							25½	20
Manure; refuse	2	1½	½															1			1½	1½	8	3	12	7
Threshing (grain & silla)			½																2	2	½	2	1½		4½	4
Transporting produce	1½	3	3½	2½	3	2	1			½											4	2	1	4	14	14
Sulphate spreading									1		1				½										2½	
Spraying(4)																1										1
"Among the trees" (general)(5)								1	1		2	2	7	5	8	7	3	2½	2						23	17½
APPLES(5): GATHERING	7	5																			2		14½	4½	23½	8½
" : "GOUGING"(6)	3½	4	7	11	1																				11½	15
VINES: GRAFTING											5½	5	1	1											6½	6
PRUNING											3½	3	2	2											5½	5
PICKING	1		4	3½																					5	3½
Making Wine			½	1																					½	1
TOMATOES: PLANTING																1		2		1						4
PICKING	½		1		1	1																			2½	1

continued.

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(Case X Table continued)

ACTIVITY		AUG. AM	AUG. PM	SEPT. AM	SEPT. PM	OCT. AM	OCT. PM	NOV. AM	NOV. PM	DEC. AM	DEC. PM	JAN. AM	JAN. PM	FEB. AM	FEB. PM	MAR. AM	MAR. PM	APR. AM	APR. PM	MAY AM	MAY PM	JUNE AM	JUNE PM	JULY AM	JULY PM	YEAR AM	YEAR PM
POTATOES:	SOWING			1	1					1		5½	7	2	3											8½	11
	LIFTING							1		5	4									7	5			½	1½	13½	10½
BARLEY:	SOWING					2	2	1	1																	3	3
	REAPING																		1	1						1	1
WHEAT:	SOWING							3	2½	1	1															4	3½
	REAPING																			4	2	6	2			10	4
GATHERING ROUGH GREENSTUFF(7)									1		2		1	2	5		4½	2	3							4	16½
BEANS:	SOWING					1		1		4	2	1	1													7	3
	CUTTING															1		2	1½	2	1					5	2½
SULLA:	SOWING																							½	1	½	1
	REAPING																	6	1½	3	2					9	3½
	BINDING																		1				½	½		½	1½
OTHER FIELD WORK		6½	2	2	1½					3	2					1		4	1½		6	5½	5	½	1	22½	19
OTHER WORK - UNSPECIFIED																4	2			2	1	1½	2			7½	5
		31	31	30	30	31	31	30	30	31	31	31	31	28	28	31	31	30	30	31	31	30	30	31	31	365	365

(1) And other Church visits.
(2) The latter part of 1957 saw exceptionally heavy rain in Malta.
(3) Including weeding, hoeing, etc.
(4) A new venture - in conjunction with Dept. of Agriculture.
(5) Largely apple orchard, in Gnejna.
(6) A laborious process of removing larva from apple-tree trunks - with penknife and piece of wire.
(7) I.e. "Maxix" - including a variety of grasses, 'inglisa', and other greenery - for animal fodder.
(8) And "odd jobs" in the house.

TABLE 7

	July[f] 57		Oct 57		Nov 57		Dec 57		Jan 58		Feb 58		May 57	
	am.	pm	am.	pm	am.	pm	am.	pm	am.	pm	am.	pm	am.	pm
Sundays, Festas	4	4	4	4	6	6	7	7	6	6	5	5	7	7
Business, Valletta	.	.	.	.	1	.	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Repairs fields & buildings (storm)	.	.	2	4[g]	1	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
No work (storm)	.	.	7	7[g]	6	3	3	3	8	7	2	2	.	.
Irrigation	8	6[j]	1	2	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	2	8	6[j]
Plowing	3	2	5	3	.	.	.	.	3	3	1	1	2	2
Planting, sowing	.	.	4	3	6	6	12	11[a]	7	8[b]	4	1	7	2
Working, etc.	5	3[c]	4	2	3	5	1	2	4	4	5	3	.	3
Cutting, reaping	8	9[d]	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	3
Lifting potatoes	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	3	3[h]	3	5[i]
Threshing	.	3	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Loading, transporting	2	1	1	1	.	.	3	3	.	2	.	1	.	2
Vines, prune, graft	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	6	7	.	.
Collecting [illegible][e]	1	1	1	4	5	5[k]	3	4	1	.	.	3	.	2
Collecting greenery			.	.	1	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	.	.
	31	31	31	31	30	30	31	31	31	31	28	28	31	31

Notes

a. all potatoes.
b. potatoes 3.5.
c. hoeing, weeding, dressing, spraying, manuring, hoeing, etc.
d. wheat and barley 4.2.
e. marix - general greenery for animal fodder.
f. data for other months not available.
g. the latter part of 1957 saw exceptional storms in Malta & Gozo.
h. the winter crop a month late on account of damp conditions.
i. the spring crop.
j. irrigation in dry months.
k. marix gathering peak after 2 months of rain.
l. including 2.2 attending to animals (too wet to work fields).

F. Production and Sales.

(i) Main cash-crop irrigated potatoes - Arran Banner. Two crops - winter and 'early' crop, the latter for export. Yields vary considerably in spite of irrigation - winter crop 1956 double the quantity of the winter crop 1957. Soil conditions for cultivation and for germination can vary critically between November and February. Prices similarly vary considerably. 1956 - maximum price obtained 30/- per qantar. 1957 - April maximum price obtain 25/- per qantar. 1957 - May maximum price obtained 15/- per qantar.

(ii) Tomatoes. Pickings from May to October with peak production in July. Prices vary inversely with production (P/253). Irrigated local varieties only are grown. The best tomatoes are kept for seed, the next grade carefully selected for sale through 'pitkal' middleman for local market, the third grade sold to the tomato paste ('Kunserva') factory. Prices range from 10d. to 1/6d. per wizna, but vary with quantity available rather than with quality. Regarded as preferable to potatoes since the farmer believes they are less expensive to produce.

(iii) Artichokes. Irrigated perennials producing for up to about 8 years. Best marketing period is during Lent. Great efforts made to raise a crop early in